

CIA has no role in policing

The Central Intelligence Agency knows very well it is the clear-cut national intent that the agency have absolutely no role in domestic law enforcement matters.

The spy agency is now engaged in legalistic quibbling to try to defend some small scale training it has done for local policemen in what is obviously a violation of long-established principle.

The CIA admits having trained local officers from several cities in such things as surveillance techniques, organization of intelligence files and detection of wiretaps. Furthermore, a spokesman says the agency intends to continue such training if requested by local police, as he says has been the case.

If the CIA is going to adopt such an attitude it is incumbent upon the Congress and the President to set them straight.

We can imagine no clearer mandate than the language of the legislation which established the CIA that "the agency shall have no police, subpoena, law enforcement or internal security functions."

This has been national policy since 1947 and one of the bedrock principles upon which the CIA was permitted to come into being.

Yet the CIA claims their actions do not violate the spirit of this law. And in a reach to do something which it is well aware is forbidden, the CIA also claims the 1968 Omnibus Crime Act gives them such authority. This law provides federal aid for local police and the CIA is saying a provision allows the Justice Department to use the services of "other civilian and military agencies and instrumentalities" to do so.

The CIA is not so naive as to think that Congress intended with this law to give them what it so basically denied in establishing the agency. The crime act is being used as a loophole — a loophole which should be plugged promptly.

There was wise judgment in the policy which forbids the secret and little accountable spy agency from becoming involved in domestic law enforcement. There should be no bending of this principle.

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